

IDLEWILD

"An African American Resort Community"

MICHIGAN HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION CEREMONY



Louis Armstrong and others on Idlewild Lake in 1928.

Prior to 1964, segregationist policies limited African Americans' options for where to spend vacation time. In 1915 white developers, Adelbert and Erastus branch of White Cloud and Wilbur Lemon and Alvin Wright of Chicago established a summer resort for blacks here, which they named Idlewild. Stories in magazines like Ebony, and advertisements in national newspapers such as the Chicago Defender promoted Idlewild and "The only place where Colored people get all they pay for and pay only for what they get." The resort drew African American members of the middle and professional classes, as well as black intellectuals such as Charles Chesnutt. Idlewild grew to encompass roughly four square miles. At the resort's peak during the early 1960's more than 20,000 people summered here.

Beginning in 1915, African Americans from throughout the country, particularly the Midwest, came to Idlewild during the summer. During the early years the resort offered beaches, boating, and other typical summer diversions. By the 1920's and into the 1960's, however, Idlewild's rousing nightlife lured swarms of visitors to the community to see elaborate floorshows and some of America's most popular black entertainers. The Arthur Braggs Idlewild Revue toured the country during the off-season, spreading the Idlewild name. The 1964 passage of the Civil Rights Act-comprehensive legislation that prohibits segregation-opened doors for blacks to stay at previously whites-only resorts. Idlewild's heyday ended. but it remained the largest African American resort in the nation.

IDLEWILD, MICHIGAN

'An African American Resort Community'

Founded 1912

*Cordially Invites You to Attend
The Michigan Historical Marker Dedication
Ceremony*

*Honoring the Historical Sites
of
Idlewild*

*Idlewild Lot Owners Association
Herman & Lela Wilson House
Dr. Daniel Hale Williams House
Williams Island & The Flamingo Club*

On

Saturday, August 29, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

For information call 231-745-3940, Ext. 11

www.michigan.gov/idlewild